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A. Generalizations

1. Formal Characteristics

The USSR regional domestic broadcasting services vary widely among themselves in time on the air, from a minimum of two or three hours daily for such stations as Astrakhan to almost continuous service for major originating and relay transmitters such as Kazan, Khabarovsk, and Kharkov. The majority, however, have a total broadcasting time of eight to sixteen hours daily, usually with a silent interval of several hours between morning and evening transmissions. Broadcasting schedules are generally extended somewhat on Sundays and holidays. Time on the air is apportioned between local studio organizations and relays of the Soviet Home Service from Moscow; certain transmitters also relay major regional stations or air the services from studios in adjacent oblasts which have no transmitter outlets of their own.*

* For a compilation of available information on USSR regional broadcasting schedules, see the FBIS Program Schedules of Foreign Broadcasters (Restricted), revised 1 March 1951. USSR Section.

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Broadcasting proper is supplemented in many towns and cities by wired loud-speaker networks which may continue operation after aerial broadcasts sign off or may carry separate programs. The bulk of wired network programming is announced as relay of the Soviet Home Service from Moscow, but musical programs and short periods of local news and announcements are also scheduled. One or two city networks schedule a regular talk, article or feature, and some Ukrainian wired networks relay Kiev broadcasts. The observations of this report are properly valid for radiated broadcasts only.

RSFSR regional services are broadcast in Russian only; those of the other republics divide their time more or less equally between Russian and the local languages. The observations herein reported have been made primarily on Russian and Ukrainian language periods. The Russian used is clear, correct, and in good form, but simple enough to be understood by all elements of the population. The vocabulary is limited, perhaps as low as one thousand words. New Soviet words, notably the composite abbreviated names of agencies and organizations, are used freely.

Male and female announcers generally alternate in reading the items of a newscast; commentaries are read by a single announcer unless of exceptional length. The announcers' diction is excellent, their pronunciation good; they appear to be well trained. Station, time, and nature of the coming program are generally announced at the beginning of each presentation. Local time is used, announced in the western zone as Moscow time. The name of the program is usually repeated at the end.

Program schedules are notorious for their instability, and advance notice of intended changes is a rarity. Special programs such as speeches by prominent officials are seldom scheduled in advance.

2. Broadcast Content

Broadcasts originating in regional studios include news, press review, commentary, plays, programs for children and youth, special features, music and entertainment.

Newscasts are arranged in the following order: (1) national news, (2) local news, (3) foreign news, (4) weather report. National items are usually repetitions from earlier Moscow broadcasts. Local news is centered on socialist competition in the particular economic activities of the locality, with especial stress on the fulfillment of seasonal tasks, but local activity is kept in perspective to republican and union long-range planning. Foreign news is scant and slanted, but a few major topics such as the Korean war and U.N. proceedings are given good play. Regional schedules are often interrupted to relay speeches of Soviet delegates at the U.N.

Press reviews are limited to surveys of the local press, and support the themes of the newscasts--socialist competition, fulfillment of seasonal tasks, economic self-criticism, contribution to the prosperity and might of the USSR.

Most commentaries are relayed or repeated from Moscow broadcasts. Regional originations are of local economic character.

Most plays heard on the regional services are Moscow relays. Classical plays are few; almost all are modern Soviet ideological productions, usually with Western imperialism in some form as villain. Programs for children and youth are similar to the themes of the plays, with additional stress on the virtues of loyalty, fearlessness, self-sacrifice.

Musical originations announced in Russian are similar to Moscow relays, containing much classical and semi-classical music, with the works of Russian and Soviet composers predominating but with Western composers well represented. Folk songs and "popular" songs complete the repertoire, the latter of patriotic or propaganda inspiration, and including usually a hymn to Stalin. Vernacular periods feature native music.

B. Notes on Individual Stations

1. Alma-Ata

a. Announcing: The Russian used is standard save for occasional words in Kazakh which are presumed to be understandable to Russian-speaking people in Kazakhstan. Announcers are well trained. Until recently the practice was to have male

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and female announcers read alternate items. At present the man or woman will read all items in a program, pausing briefly between each one. Special announcements and decrees are also read in their entirety by one voice.

b. Presentation: The main news program begins with the announcement that news will be broadcast in both Kazakh and Russian. The first fifteen minutes are devoted to Kazakh, and Russian follows immediately without further announcement. Scheduling is somewhat erratic.

c. Technical quality: The transmitter is well modulated and produces a strong and clear signal. Audio quality is very good.

2. Khabarovsk

a. Program patterns: The Khabarovsk radio is on the air almost continuously for 22 hours daily, including about six hours during which its transmitters are in direct hook-up with Moscow for the relay of regularly scheduled newscasts and features. Programs originating in the Khabarovsk studios include newscasts, articles, and talks broadcast daily except Sunday, as well as entertainment programs and special features for particular listening groups. The Sunday schedule is devoted almost entirely to concerts, choral singing, literary readings, or dramatic presentations, often relayed from Moscow.

Regular news and entertainment programs are occasionally taken off the air to secure time for the broadcasting of speeches by high Soviet officials on special occasions or for descriptions of festivities on military anniversaries, in which the seamen of the Amur Red Banner river flotilla invariably participate. Unscheduled broadcasts are rare, and programs are almost never interrupted for bulletins or special announcements.

b. Newscasts: Of the three Khabarovsk Russian-language newscasts monitored regularly, the first deals only with activities in the Khabarovsk Krai; the second carries news from abroad and from the USSR as a whole, including the Khabarovsk Krai and the Soviet Far East; and the third, an overall news roundup of foreign and domestic news, rarely contains material originating in the Soviet Far East and appears to be based entirely on material originally broadcast over the home service from Moscow.

Broadcast time on the two later programs is variable: although generally lasting a half hour, they sometimes continue for an hour or more when a lengthy report on an official statement or speech is included. Once or twice a week the newscasts may be preceded by the rebroadcast of a recent PRAVDA editorial, in which case news time is held down to 15 minutes. The Khabarovsk Krai news program is less frequently subject to change. On the relatively rare occasions when the schedule is modified to make time for a play on a current propaganda theme, the Krai news is usually sandwiched in between the acts rather than eliminated altogether.

News from abroad and from the USSR as a whole, credited to TASS, generally repeats material broadcast 24 to 48 hours earlier over Moscow transmitters, although the time lapse in some cases may be considerably greater. Local news originates with the Khabarovsk Krai Radio Committee.

c. Commentaries and features: Regular features over the Khabarovsk radio include weekly broadcasts for Krai lumbermen and bi-weekly broadcasts for fishermen, occasional programs for Krai farm workers, "guides for agitators," and special broadcasts about once a week for junior- and senior-grade schoolchildren. Feature stories by on-the-spot rural correspondents describing some phase of farm, fishing, or socialist competition activities are broadcast periodically.

Feature articles and talks on a variety of topics, broadcast singly or serially, are written locally or received from Soviet press or Party sources. A number of radio features are sponsored by the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge, although most of the talks on Party theory originate at the lecture bureau of the Krai Communist Party Committee.

Presented at regular intervals is a series under the general title "At the Map of the World," originating over Moscow transmitters and consisting of Marxist-Stalinist treatises on various aspects of some particular foreign country. These talks have been broadcast from Khabarovsk as much as four or five months after their original presentation over the Moscow radio.

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Other features include a series entitled "Across the Homeland," a travelogue covering specific agricultural and industrial areas of the USSR, and "Answers to Radio Listeners' Questions" on topics dealing with the international situation, capitalist versus planned economy, and so on.

d. Entertainment programs: Sunday entertainment features include dramatic skits, plays, and expert readings of historical narratives, short stories, or chapters from novels by Russian classical and contemporary writers, as well as occasional popular science and art talks.

The dramatic presentations are largely of Soviet manufacture. Plays originally staged in Moscow are read in full, divided into acts and scenes, with no attempt at condensation for radio. One such full-length play, presented over the Khabarovsk as well as other Soviet regional transmitters, debated the moral justification of a Soviet scientist in revealing to the U.S. capitalist press the discovery in the USSR of a method for alleviating pain. The scientist was condemned as having betrayed the cause of science by placing the discovery in the hands of persons who would exploit it for profit. (The extent of his corruption was demonstrated by his use of an expensive fountain pen, a gift brought back from the United States.)

Translations of foreign productions have also been featured, as in the full-length reading of the New York stage production "Deep Are the Roots," with a view to demonstrating the evils of capitalist, and particularly U.S., society. Extracts from the works of American writers such as Steinbeck have also been read serially.

Musical programs appear carefully arranged to strike a fairly even balance of classical, popular, and folk music. Special songs and novelties are included in the various broadcasts for young people, and periodic programs for war veterans feature reminiscences of battle interspersed with popular marching songs.

e. Announcers: The language used over the Khabarovsk radio is the standard Russian of the Soviet period, having no particular regional flavor. Khabarovsk announcers appear to be selected primarily for the quality of their voices. Their delivery is expert and they pace themselves well. Announcer Mikhail Ternekh speaks with a cultured tone and accent and seems superior even to many of Radio Moscow's announcers, and the woman Mikhailova runs him a close second. Men and women announcers usually alternate in reading items on the newscasts, relieving the monotony of constantly repetitious material such as appears on the Krai news programs.

f. Technical qualities: Although reception of Khabarovsk programs on the U.S. west coast has been markedly inferior in 1950 to reception in previous years, there is no evidence that this deterioration has been due to any factors other than increased sun-spot activity and general atmospheric conditions. Khabarovsk transmitters, although outclassed by those of Moscow and Kiev and probably also by the Riga and Komsomolsk senders, appear well maintained technically.

3. Kiev

Kiev is on the air some 20 hours daily (21 on Sundays) with the most extensive of the Ukrainian regional services, which is relayed in part by other Ukrainian stations. An additional three hours is devoted to dictation transmission of the RATAU agency news in Russian and in Ukrainian for town newspapers. As the capital of a republic embracing industrial centers, coal fields and mining and agricultural areas, Kiev broadcasts material on a wide variety of economic activity.

4. Magadan

a. Program patterns: Unlike most other Soviet regional transmitters, Magadan carries no regular relays of Moscow broadcasts. Rare exceptions are Red Army Ensemble concerts and dramatic skits from Moscow, although it is possible that these may be broadcast from recordings rather than actually relayed.

Magadan broadcasts as a whole reflect the virtually complete control by the Dalstroy (State Administration of Far North Construction Projects) of practically every phase of the economic, political and cultural life of the Kolyma Oblast, sometimes referred to in the broadcasts as an area of "pioneering settlement" (pionerskogo osvoyeniya). Material has been broadcast periodically from the central Magadan station to be recorded at various radio substations for use by newspapers of the political departments of areas under the Dalstroy administration.

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Daily programs include a 20-minute regional newscast, talks or articles on Party theory for the guidance of "agitators," rebroadcasts of Moscow's "At the Map of the World" series, "Answers to Radio Listeners' Questions," broadcasts for school children, literary presentations, and musical programs featuring request numbers of various groups of Dalstroy employees.

Broadcast material is credited variously to the Magadan Radio Committee, the Magadan branch of the Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge, and local correspondents in various Kolyma localities.

b. Newscasts: The major portion of the daily regional newscast is almost invariably devoted to reports on the mining of "metal." The word "gold" is never mentioned, although the announcers use many terms from the standard technical vocabulary of the gold-mining industry. The newscast contains frequent allusions to mines and other enterprises in the various Kolyma subregions and to road-building, motor pools, highway trucking services, repair-shop activities at motor vehicle bases, and construction activities, with little explanation as to the nature of the construction.

The broadcasts depict Magadan as a fairly large town with hundreds of professional people, houses of two and three stories, schools and at least one technical college, theaters, a lecturers bureau, stores where such luxuries as silk can be bought by the meter, state savings banks, teams of sportsmen, and probably several small plants. Mention has been made of a state publishing house, the Sovetskaya Kolyma, whose main function appears to be the reprint of approved novels in monthly installments having a newspaper format, easily transportable to distant settlements and mines. It also apparently publishes election literature and official forms for a large section of the Soviet northeast Arctic regions.

News items from abroad, only rarely included, are duplicates of items broadcast as much as several days earlier over Moscow transmitters.

c. Entertainment programs: Feature programs originating in the Magadan studios exhibit a curious mixture of backwoods regionalism and up-to-date Soviet culture. Songs, recitations, and talks delivered in colloquial style by local guest speakers are intermingled with expert dramatic readings and musical recitals by professional artists. Some of the more professional recitations appear to be broadcast from recordings, although others sound as though they may originate in Magadan's own studios.

d. Announcers: In its news programs the Magadan radio follows the usual Soviet pattern of alternating men's and women's voices, but talks and commentaries are usually read by men. The Russian spoken by the regular announcers is standard, sometimes revealing a provincial accent but usually enunciated with a distinct Moscow flavor.

e. Technical qualities: Reception of Magadan broadcasts on the U.S. west coast is at its worst during the late spring, summer, and early fall, and is almost never comparable to that of Khabarovsk or Petropavlovsk broadcasts. Operating outside the internationally assigned broadcast bands, the Magadan radio is subject to heavy interference from various commercial stations.

5. Nikolaevsk-on-Amur

a. Program patterns: A radio hour for the Lower Amur regional audience follows substantially the same pattern as that of the Petropavlovsk station, opening daily except Sunday with a short talk, article, or feature story, followed by a regional newscast of about 15 minutes' duration, entertainment features, and a brief review of the Nikolaevsk daily KRASNIIY MAYAK (THE RED BEACON). The Nikolaevsk station carries no direct relays of Moscow broadcasts, but relays a daily newscast from Khabarovsk.

b. Newscasts: News coverage is restricted largely to the city of Nikolaevsk and the Lower Amur Oblast, and includes fairly frequent although brief stories concerning fishing establishments along the Okhotsk seaboard. Emphasis is on the evidently large-scale and continuously developing fishing and canning industries of the areas, with figures relating to the current progress of the fishing, canning, and shipping programs. Indications of population trends can at times be gleaned from these broadcasts, as, for example, from reports on resettlement along the Okhotsk seaboard of expert fishermen from central USSR areas.

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The news roundups, apparently compiled entirely from local Party or newspaper sources, are perhaps the least competently edited of any such programs monitored over Soviet regional stations. The impression created by the station as a whole is that of a backwoods setup, by no means comparable in efficiency to the Khabarovsk or even the Petropavlovsk station. The newscasts contain a preponderance of reports on the accomplishments of individual workers (the number of fish scaled in a single day by a woman cannery worker, for example), accompanied by appeals to other workers to emulate them. Material published in the KRASNIY MAYAK, as summarized over the air, appears to be of the same caliber.

c. Features and entertainment: The entertainment portion of the broadcast generally consists of recorded music or amateur performances by local musicians, alternating with youth programs and pep talks for workers. Scripts for some of the lectures and talks appear to originate with the Khabarovsk Radio Committee. Like the Petropavlovsk station, the Nikolaevsk radio carries periodic talks on labor achievements by local workers, cannery managers, and so on.

d. Announcers: Nikolaevsk's announcers, all women, speak with strong regional accents and mannerisms and appear to have little or no special training for radio.

e. Technical qualities: This station, like Magadan, operates outside the regular broadcast bands and is virtually inaudible on the U.S. west coast over long periods of time, particularly during the summer months.

6. Odessa

The Odessa station, in addition to voice broadcasts, transmits in Russian Morse a Monday, Wednesday and Friday bulletin for ships on the Black Sea. The bulletin usually begins with messages for individual ships and concludes with a review of MORYAK, a newspaper for seamen. The review cites national and local news, a few items of foreign news, and editorials stressing chiefly the socialist competition among ships' crews.

Until recently the Russian Morse was keyed by hand. The inauguration of automatic transmission, at about 25 words per minute, was accompanied by improvement in signal strength.

7. Petropavlovsk-on-Kamchatka

a. Program patterns: A regular program lasting approximately an hour, prepared by the Kamchatka Oblast Committee on Radio Information, usually opens on weekdays with a talk or commentary by a local administrator, Party member, or Stakhanov workman or with a brief lecture "in aid to the political propagandists," followed by a regional news roundup, features, and a review of the latest issue of the Petropavlovsk KAMCHATSKAYA PRAVDA.

The regional news is followed two or three times weekly by a special broadcast for "young pioneers" or adolescents and on other days by short concerts of popular or folk music or by literary readings. Feature stories or short travelogues replace the KAMCHATSKAYA PRAVDA review on Mondays. Sunday programs are devoted entirely to music and other entertainment, along the same lines as that broadcast from Khabarovsk.

b. Newscasts: Petropavlovsk news roundups deal only with regional matters and devote most of the broadcast time to local production problems. In line with the avowed Soviet press function of "educating" rather than merely imparting information, the news items, like the majority of the commentaries which precede and follow them, are in the nature of appeals to the workers of the Kamchatka fishing industry and related industries and concerns to step up production.

Although overall figures on increases, profits, and planned production are expressed generally in percentages only, partial statistics referring to production by individual concerns, groups, and workmen over short periods of time are cited in abundance.

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Petropavlovsk radio listeners must depend almost entirely on regular relays of Moscow broadcasts for news from abroad and from the USSR as a whole. The only mention of events beyond the Soviet borders on the local radio hour is during the reading of the KAMCHATSKAYA PRAVDA review, when TASS dispatches from abroad, published daily in the Petropavlovsk paper, are summarized very briefly. Editorials on production problems from the Moscow PRAVDA, as reprinted in the Petropavlovsk organ, are also quoted infrequently.

c. Talks and features: The Kamchatka Oblast Radio Committee, apparently with the cooperation of local Party leaders, arranges for frequent radio appearances and special broadcasts by Party members, management and production chiefs, and Stakhanov men and women workers. Arrangements are made periodically to cut in certain of the Kamchatka Oblast radio substations, such as Milkovo, Palana, and Ust-Kamchatsk, or stations belonging to the large fishery combines for the relay of speeches by local workers or Party members over the entire network. Telephone interviews are occasionally recorded and rebroadcast, and speeches are sometimes played back from recordings.

The Radio Committee programs regional travelogues and popular science talks by local teachers, medical workers, and other "intellectuals," as well as broadcasts for young people in which school children themselves participate. There is some indication that lecture scripts may at times be borrowed from Khabarovsk or other regional stations.

Literary readings over the Petropavlovsk station, like those from Khabarovsk, are expertly presented. Recordings made by nationally known actors are frequently played back for the regional audience.

d. Announcers: Petropavlovsk radio announcers, all women, use a standard literate Russian and show some evidence of training in voice projection, pacing, and delivery. Teachers on the children's programs, members of Soviet lecture bureaus, and network commentators also use good standard Russian, with fair to good delivery. By contrast, the local Party administrators, technical experts, and fishing industry workers regularly brought before the microphone ignore all elements of good public speaking: they exhibit a variety of regional accents and personal mannerisms and tend to use industrial slang terms, Siberian provincial expressions, and occasional native words.

e. Technical qualities: Reception on the U.S. west coast of broadcasts over the Petropavlovsk station is almost uniformly excellent except in the case of relays from local substations, when apparent technical shortcomings at the relay points, combined with the poor delivery and regional accents of the untrained guest speakers, sometimes render portions of the broadcasts almost unintelligible.

8. Ulan Bator

a. Mongolian language: The news quality of Ulan Bator's Mongolian-language program is poor. Foreign news items, supplied by TASS, come seven days late and are locally embellished with such phrases as "American highway robbers" or "sitters under the bridge with a club." Home news follows the standard Soviet pattern: a farmer or herder who has made some outstanding contribution to production is quoted in praise of the socialistic system and denunciation of capitalism. The level of production is always rising, but no tangible statistics are given on harvests, stockraising, or industrial output. Commentaries, echoing the Soviet central press or Radio Moscow, may deal with libraries in some remote Soviet republic or with cotton-raising in Uzbekistan, but inevitably the Ulan Bator announcer will inject into them some uncomplimentary words about American atom mongers.

There are two full-time announcers, a man and a woman, who speak the Khalkhan dialect, considered the Mandarin of Mongolia. Both are careless in enunciation and timing, and inconsistent in pronunciation. The woman has an unpleasant voice and such irritating habits as sighing, clearing her throat, sipping tea audibly at the microphone, or leaving it for several minutes during a broadcast and then rushing back with a loud flow of words seemingly to cover up her dereliction. The studio itself is not soundproof. The blare of horns on passing automobiles and the noise of crowds intrude upon the program. The announcers' voices are never clear, and seem to echo from every angle of the studio. Scheduling is haphazard: programs come on earlier or later than the announced hour; often music is substituted for news, or vice versa; the relay of Moscow in Mongolian or Russian sometimes goes off the air without warning.

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b. Russian language: The 1115 to 1145 GMT program in Russian is given every day except Sunday and generally consists of a review of the newspaper UNEN, Party organ of the Mongolian People's Republic. Occasionally there is an article from NEW TIMES, a very important political speech, or an article on politics. News from outside the USSR is given much more time on this program than on any broadcasts from the USSR proper, not excluding Moscow.

Standard Russian is used throughout the program, with some Mongolian words appearing when domestic affairs are touched upon. The Mongolian words at such times are those for which there is no adequate Russian translation. A woman, believed to be one Severuhina, has done all the announcing since early 1950, when she took over this program from another woman. Although apparently a professional at the microphone, she is not as good as the Vladivostok announcers and has the bad habit of racing through the latter part of her script when time runs short.

Scheduling is erratic. Although the average length of the program is thirty minutes, it may last anywhere from twenty-five to fifty minutes. It may begin four or five minutes ahead of scheduled time or continue ten minutes past the announced closing time. From a technical standpoint, quality of the transmission has been poor, though great improvement is noticed in the new frequency of 7998 kcs adopted about the middle of August 1950. This frequency produces a very strong signal and fairly clear audio quality, and no faults attributable to defective equipment have thus far been observed.

9. Vladivostok

a. Voice broadcasts: The Primorski regional service is broadcast in standard Russian. Announcers are professionals at the microphone, equal in enunciation and presentation to Moscow announcers. In news broadcasts a man and a woman read alternate items. The same practice is followed in newspaper reviews. Articles, lectures and political programs are read by a single announcer unless the material is readily divisible into sections.

Scheduling is erratic in the sense that programs are permitted to continue unchanged to the end, so that the broadcast may end too soon or stay on the air too long. Programs have begun as early as forty minutes ahead of schedule and as late as thirty minutes behind schedule.

The studios appear to be well soundproofed; no extraneous noises have been heard on programs recently monitored. The signal is strong and well modulated and the audio quality is very clear. Until the middle of 1950 a Soviet program in foreign languages could be heard faintly in the background. This appeared to have been picked up by the lines in the studio and was not a program being broadcast simultaneously on a similar frequency. The fault was eliminated when Vladivostok changed to the present frequency of 5022 kcs.

b. Siberian Press Service: An information service in Russian Morse for Soviet Far East merchant marine seamen and employees is operated daily except Sunday from Vladivostok, subtitled "Newspaper of the Air, TIKHOOKEANSKITY MORYAK (PACIFIC SEAMAN)." The cast usually begins with a Vladivostok-dated item, stressing activities of seamen in the Vladivostok basin. Resolutions and directives from the "basskommor," the Party-dominated seamen's committee of the port of Vladivostok, receive frequent mention.

The port news is generally followed by short items grouped under the general headings: "In the Maritime Krai," "In the Soviet Union," and "News from Abroad." Feature stories on the purported activities of foreign sailors and seamen are occasionally included.

The transmission is signed regularly by "responsible editor Krupenya."

The Vladivostok sender is extremely poor from the standpoint of technical efficiency. The cast is often unreadable in spots because of the slurring of letters as they are transmitted, and errors in sending are rarely corrected either during or after the transmission.

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10. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk

News programs intercepted from the Southern Sakhalinsk station appear to follow the Soviet regional newscast pattern, containing reports on agricultural pursuits by discharged World War II veterans recently settled in Sakhalin and on local industries such as lumber-procurement, fishing, canning, and coastal shipping, in which veterans are employed.

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